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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "Funeral Services Slated for Brother Robert J. Geary, S.M.; Taught at University of Dayton, Chaminade High School" (2002). *News Releases*. 10097.
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March 19, 2002
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NEWS RELEASE

FUNERAL SERVICES SLATED FOR BROTHER ROBERT J. GEARY, S.M.; TAUGHT AT UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON, CHAMINADE HIGH SCHOOL

DAYTON, Ohio — Funeral services for Brother Robert James Geary, S.M., 81, a veteran high-school and college chemistry and math teacher, will be held at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 23, at the Mount St. John Queen of Apostles Chapel, 4435 E. Patterson Road in Dayton. Burial will follow at nearby Queen of Heaven Cemetery.

Geary died Monday, March 18, after a lengthy illness with cancer. He was a member of the Society of Mary (Marianists) for 62 years.

Born in Sioux, City, Iowa, on July 10, 1920, Geary was introduced to the Marianists at age 9, when the Catholic religious order began overseeing Trinity College, about a mile from his home. Influenced by the example set by these men, Geary would later recall, he entered the postulate at Mount St. John in 1937.

In writing for admission to the order, he told Francis Jung, vicar general of the Society of Mary that "almost as far back as I can remember, I have desired to be a Brother of Mary." Geary professed his first vows in 1939 and his perpetual vows in 1945 at Mount St. John.

In 1943 he received a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Dayton and, in 1953, earned his master's degree in education from Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

For most of his adult life, Geary taught science and math at the high-school level. He taught at Chaminade High School in Dayton from 1943-44, 1952-54 and 1960-65. He also taught at Catholic high schools in Africa, Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Brooklyn and Kenya.

Aside from teaching, Geary coached basketball, served as athletic director and, among other clubs, supervised the cheerleaders and bowling teams at some of the schools. He had a special interest in ham radio communication, introducing students to it and using it to link to other Marianists throughout the U.S. and Africa.

In 1979, after returning to the U.S. from Africa after 14 years, he became a chemistry instructor at the University of Dayton. About those years, he wrote: "I have been able to meet

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and know a large number of wonderful kids! What a difference in teaching on the college level, as compared to the high school science!"

Brother Edward E. Zamierowski, S.M., recalled Geary as a "physically imposing figure with a gentle, good natured side.

"Brother Bob stood close to six-feet, five-inches tall and had an attitude that commanded respect, if not fear at times," said Zamierowski, laughing. "He had a rough exterior, but underneath it all he was a big softy."

When he wasn't teaching or serving the order, Geary was often found with a "rod and reel in his hand," said Zamierowski, who taught biology at UD in the mid-1970s and again between 1987-94. "We was an excellent fisherman. The Marianists have a vacation retreat at Indian Lake, and I often saw Brother Bob's name posted for having caught the largest fish."

Brother John L. Lucier, S.M., who invited Geary to come to work at UD in 1979, remembered his departed colleague as "appearing the large ogre but having the heart of a lamb."

While some students saw him as "unapproachable," Geary had moments when he revealed a lighter side, Lucier recalled: "I remember when one student, insisting on a higher grade for the course, defiantly approached Brother Bob. He smiled at her and said there wasn't anything he could do about her grade, then smiled at her and said, 'But I do like brownies.'"

Geary was "very good with his hands and a hard worker," added Lucier, who chaired UD's chemistry department in the 1970s and 1980s before retiring in 1994 as a distinguished service professor. "He was a good teacher and very generous with his time and energy. You seldom saw him sitting down."

Geary was preceded in death by his parents and is survived by his brothers, Charles and George Geary; sisters, Lucille Lennon and Catherine Uhl; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Society of Mary (Marianists), 4435 East Patterson Road, Dayton, Ohio 45430-1095.

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